

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JIDDA 01697 071607Z

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3953

S E C R E T JIDDA 1697

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FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO AND ASST SECRETARY ATHERTON
FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, JO, US, XF

SUBJECT: JORDAN'S AIR DEFENSE PROBLEMS

REF (A) AMMAN 1223, (B) AMMAN 1225, (C) STATE 54657

1. WE HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED REPLY PROMISED BY FONMIN
PRINCE SAUD TO OUR PRESENTATION FEB. 29 ON IMPROVED
HAWK(JIDDA 1554). I WILL BE CALLING ON SAUD SHORTLY IN
CONNECTION WITH REFTEL C.

2. REGARDLESS OF WHAT PRINCE SAUD SURMISED SO FAR, MY
ASSOCIATES AND I BELIEVE THAT JORDAN CANNOT COUNT ON BEING
ABLE TO SPEND SAG ASSISTANCE ON SOVIET MISSILE SYSTEM.
IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR ANYONE IN THE COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS TO JUSTIFY THE SAG'S DE FACTO COOPERATION AT
INTRODUCING SOVIET ADVISORS AND A RUSSIAN WEAPON SYSTEM
INTO JORDAN. THE SAG COULD BECOME EVEN MORE REFRACTORY
WHEN IT LEARNS THAT THE SOVIET AIR CHIEF WILL VISIT
JORDAN IN MAY AND THAT KING HUSSEIN PLANS TO MAKE A
TRIP TO THE SOVIET UNION LATER IN THAT MONTH. IF THEY
KNOW THESE THINGS NOW, THAT MIGHT ACCOUNT IN PART FOR
THE REPORTS OF PRESENT SAG RECALCITRANCE THAT ARE COMING
IN.

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3. SAUDI RELUCTANCE TO COMMIT BEYOND THE OFFERED

\$300 MILLION IS TYPICAL. THEY KNOW THEY HAVE NO GUARANTEE THAT THE THREE QUARTERS OF A BILLION DOLLAR PRICE NOW BEING QUOTED FOR THE JORDANIAN SYSTEM WILL HOLD, EVEN AT THAT LEVEL. NO GUARANTEE AT ALL. FROM PAST EXPERIENCES WITH US, AND FROM THEIR OWN MISSILE SYSTEM, THEY MUST KNOW THAT THEY ARE BEING ASKED IN ADVANCE TO SHOULDER A ONE BILLION DOLLARS PLUS COMMITMENT--FOR ONLY ONE ASPECT OF ONE NEIGHBOR'S MILITARY DEFENSES. A COMMITMENT OF THESE PROPORTIONS IS A MAJOR UNDERTAKING, EVEN FOR THE SAG. ACCORDINGLY, I WISH TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS:

A. AMBASSADOR PICKERING SHOULD INFORM JORDANIANS THAT OUR BEST ADVICE IS TO TAKE THE \$300 MILLION, MAKE THE DOWN PAYMENT, AND BUY WHAT THEY CAN WITH THE TOTALITY OF THAT GRANT. GIVEN THE COST OVERRUNS CURRENT AND EXPECTED, HUSSEIN WILL EVENTUALLY BE IN A POSITION TO APPROACH SAG WITH FACTS AND, IN 1977 OR 1978, DEMONSTRATE A REAL NEED FOR SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDS. AFTER ALL \$300 MILLION ISN'T CHICKEN FEED. THAT IS WHAT THE SAG MADE AVAILABLE IN "ECONOMIC" AID TO SADAT, AND TO THE MOROCCANS, AND THE FIGURE THUS ACQUIRES A PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

B. NOW WITH REGARD TO THE "WE'LL-GO-TO-THE-RUSSIANS" PLOY, AND JORDANIAN/USSR EXCHANGES OF HIGH LEVEL VISITORS, THE KINDEST THING WE CAN DO FOR THE JORDANIANS IS TELL THEM COOLLY, CLEARLY, AND CONCISELY TO TURN IT ALL OFF. IN RECOMMENDING THAT WE DO THIS, I AM NOT MERELY CONCERNED ABOUT SAG REACTION TO SUCH DEVELOPMENTS. I HAVE IN MIND ISRAELI INTEREST IN ANYTHING RESEMBLING JORDANIAN TENDENCIES TO MESS AROUND WITH THE SOVIETS. THE SAUDIS MIGHT BE VERY ANNOYED INDEED; AND WE MIGHT EVEN REMONSTRATE; BUT THOSE ISRAELLIS ARE SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN AND HUSSEIN SHOULD NOT TRIFLE WITH THEM.

C. I HAVE READ CAREFULLY THE FULSOME (WEBSTER'S THIRD) TEXT OF THE PROPOSED MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY TO FAHD ON THIS MELANCHOLY SUBJECT (REF B), AND I EXPERIENCE SOME SLIGHT FEELING OF REGRET

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BECAUSE I MUST INSIST THAT THE SECRETARY'S PRESTIGE SHOULD NOT BE PUT INTO PLAY ON SUCH A BASIS. IF I COULD FIND IN THAT TEXT, WHICH I DO NOT, SOME ASSURANCE THAT THERE WILL NOT BE ANOTHER COST OR ESTIMATE OVERRUN, I MIGHT FEEL IT WORTH CONSIDERATION. BUT, I CAN'T SAY THAT AS MATTERS STAND. AT THE PRESENT ANNUAL RATE OF 15 PERCENT INFLATION FOR COMPLEX TECHNOLOGY OF THE NATURE WE ARE DISCUSSING, IS

THE SECRETARY SUPPOSED TO GO THROUGH THIS
CHANTAGE AGAIN IN A MATTER OF MONTHS? WHAT
ASSURANCE CAN BE GIVEN TO THE CONTRARY?

D. BEFORE I SEEK THE APPOINTMENT WITH SAUD MENTIONED
IN REFTEL C, MAY I ASK YOUR CONSIDERED COMMENT ON
THE ABOVE? PLEASE DO REQUEST DOD'S BEST EFFORT TO
FORMULATE ANY OTHER KIND OF PROGRAM WITHIN THE
ALLOWED \$300 MILLION RANGE AND ABOVE ALL CONSIDER
WELL MY RECOMMENDATIONS MADE ABOVE, ESPECIALLY MY
ADVICE THAT JORDAN SHOULD GRAB THE \$300 MILLION AND
SCAT REPEAT SCAT.

4. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS AMMAN.
PORTER

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